

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD

Docket No. 6486

Tariff filing of Barnet Water System, Inc. requesting)
an overall increase in its rates in the amount of)
71.9%, to take effect April 1, 2001)

Order Entered: 6/12/2001

PREHEARING CONFERENCE MEMORANDUM

BACKGROUND

On February 13, 2001, Barnet Water Systems, Inc. ("Company") filed a petition with the Public Service Board ("Board") requesting an overall increase in its rates in the amount of 71.9%, to take effect January 1, 2001 (Tariff Filing No. 4299).¹ The Company subsequently amended its filing to reflect an effective date of April 1, 2001. The Company is also requesting a proposed rate design change, and authority to annually apply a consumer price indexed increase to its tariffed rates.

On March 16, 2001, the Vermont Department of Public Service ("Department"), pursuant to 30 V.S.A. Section 225, informed the Board that it had reviewed the filing and recommended that the tariff filing be suspended and that an investigation and hearings be held.

In order to set a schedule for the rest of this Docket and to consider any other pending issues, I convened a prehearing conference in this matter on April 5, 2001. The Company was represented by Harry Henderson, its President. Geoffrey Commons, Esq., appeared on behalf of the Department. No other person or organization attended the status conference.

At the prehearing conference, the Company and the Department agreed to proceed for the next six weeks by conducting informal discovery and negotiating with each other. The parties also agreed to work with the Clerk of the Board to set a date for a public hearing to be held jointly in this Docket and in the Docket investigating the Company's request for a transfer

1. The Company also filed a petition for transfer of the Certificate of Public Good and a request for borrowing authority. These transactions will be addressed in a separate proceeding, Docket 6496, although for the purpose of hearings, these two dockets will be scheduled together.

of the Certificate of Public Good ("CPG").² They subsequently agreed to schedule a public hearing on May 15, 2001.

At the prehearing conference, the Department also indicated that shortly after the public hearing, it and the Company would submit either a stipulation with respect to the issues in this Docket, or they would propose a further schedule for the resolution of this Docket. Since their suggested date, May 18, 2001, has come and gone, I will require that they make their filing by June 29, 2001.

The parties also agreed that an intervention deadline should be established within a short period after the public hearing, inasmuch as ratepayers will have had sufficient notice of the request for a rate increase and for transfer of the CPG. I agree and, hereby, establish June 19, 2001, as the deadline for interventions in these proceedings. Responses to any motion to intervene are due June 26, 2001.

SO ORDERED.

DATED at Montpelier, Vermont, this 12th day of June, 2001.

s/David Farnsworth
David Farnsworth, Esq.
Hearing Officer

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

FILED: June 12, 2001

ATTEST: s/Susan M. Hudson
Clerk of the Board

NOTICE TO READERS: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Board (by e-mail, telephone, or mail) of any technical errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: Clerk@psb.state.vt.us)

2. The Parties agreed that both the rate increase request in this Docket, and any issues arising in the Docket investigating the Company's request for a transfer of the CPG, could be discussed together at the public hearing.